
The MCA Advisory

The Newsletter of Medal Collectors of America

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What's New on Our Website!
CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE EVERY MONTH

From the Editor

ANA 2010 was a banner occasion for the Club. Our annual meeting, which drew a full house, was held in the spacious and elegant Dowse Library at the Massachusetts Historical Society. Afterwards, attendees were blown away by the 10 case exhibit mounted by Anne Bentley. This sumptuous feast warrants a separate description but suffice for now to say that it contained the Washington-Webster set of Comitia Americana medals.

Ultimately and reluctantly, Board members adjourned to a different kind of feast, this one held at the Sel de la Terre, a French bistro in the area. Invited guests included celebrated Canadian numismatists Warren Baker and Chris Faulkner. Also present were Thelma Fisher, who prepares the Advisory every month, and Bob Williams, lead photographer from the Admiral Vernon team. Stimulating conversation and overflowing good spirits marked the occasion.

Our club members were well represented in the Exhibition Hall at the convention. Dick Margolis won a blue ribbon for his breathtaking display of Franklin material. Included in the four cases were medals (such as a perfect die trial piece of the Libertas obverse), terra cottas (notably two of the large size along with an original die), Wedgewoods galore and much more. We hope to prevail on Dick for an extended write up of this once-in-a-lifetime treat.

Other ribbon winners were a blue for David Menchell's medals of the Charitable and Mechanical Society and a red for John Sallay's Boston school medals. Both featured material that was rare, well-organized and almost overwhelming in its impact.

For MCA at the ANA, 2010 was a vintage year.

A Diary of FIDEM 2010ⁱ

(by Donald Scarinci)

Wednesday, June 16: The opening day of FIDEM 2010 began with welcoming remarks followed by lectures, an exhibition of Finnish medals at the Galleria Saskia and the opening of the exhibition's art medals at the Tampere Art Museum.

After brief remarks by Ilkka Voionmaa, President of FIDEM, Dr. Gunnel Sievers, President of the Finnish Art Medal Society, and Perttu Pesa, Deputy Mayor of Tampere City, delegates from 21 countries were treated to some Finnish folk music and a lecture by Dr. Jyrkl Siukonen, Professor at the University of Lapland, Finland, "The Medal and its Negative."

Delegates could choose from nine lectures ranging from "Medallic art in Poland," by Tomasz Bylicki to "Giovanni de 'Candida and the beginnings of Dutch medallic art in the Netherlands, 1477—1519," by Carolien Voigtmann, Curator at the Money Museum in the Netherlands. Panels were chaired by Philip Attwood, Curator of Coins and Medals at the British Museum and Pawel Leski, a sculptor from Poland.

The Galleria Saskia hosted a reception which included the opening of a special exhibit of medals and small sculpture by Finnish artists organized by the Finnish Art Medal Society. All of the medals on exhibit were available for sale.

The Official exhibition of art medals opened at the Tampere Art Museum. The medals were arranged around larger works of sculpture on all three floors of the museum. The exhibits of each country were neatly displayed with cards containing information identifying the artist and the name of the medal.

The United States had a strong representation of sculptors including Mashiko, James MaloneBeach, Polly Purvis, George

ⁱ Some of this material has appeared on the Numismaster web site as it was written.

Cuhaj, Marika Smogyi, Ivanka Mincheva, Lindley Briggs and Linda McVay.

Following some opening remarks, the Tampere Art Museum featured classical music and offered wine and a light dinner to all FIDEM conference participants. Over 1000 conference medals were on display from 21 countries. Extra catalogs, a DVD showing each medal on exhibit and a FIDEM 2010 conference poster were available for sale.

Thursday, June 17: Morning lectures were followed by a tour of Tampere and a viewing of the special exhibit of medals honoring Finnish writers at the Metso Library. Philip Attwood, curator of Coins and Medals at the British Museum was the plenary speaker presenting a survey of the four centuries of medallic art and tradition featured in Mark Jones, "The Art of the Medal." He challenged researchers and writers on the subject of medallic art to consider both how the sculptor viewed the work that he was producing and how the public perceived the work the sculptor produced.

A total of eight other lectures were offered including a survey of the contemporary art medal of Spain by Javier Gimeno, sculptor of Spain; a survey of Volte Face and the contemporary Portuguese Art medal by Professor & sculptor, Joao Duarte of Portugal; and a survey of the work produced at the Studio of medallic Art at the Academy of Fine Art in Warsaw, Poland, by sculptor Hanna Jelonek.

Lectures featuring historical medals included a talk by Uliana Volkova of Russia about the medals dedicated to Prussian King Frederic the Great (1740-1786).

Delegates and conference participants were given a tour of the City of Tampere with stops for photographs and time to taste the fresh Finnish strawberries. The final stop included a tour of the Metso Library completed in 1986 and designed by Raili and Reima Pietila, two important Finnish architects.

The second floor of the Metso Library has a special exhibit of medals on Finnish

writers from their collection. The medals cover the span of about 100 years and include work by Gerda Qvist, and other important Finnish sculptors. The exhibit was prepared to honor the FIDEM delegates to Tampere.

The second day of the FIDEM congress ended with a reception at the old City Hall in the center of Tampere.

Friday, June 18: The last day of lectures began with the plenary lecture on, "A Medallic History of Finland," by Tuukka Taivio of Finland. It was followed by nine additional lectures, three of which were given by Americans: George Cuhaj spoke about the Gilroy Roberts Fellowship offered through the American Numismatic Association; James Malone Beach presented pictures and a talk on "The things you don't see in FIDEM" and Donald Scarinci delivered a paper on the history of the J. Sanford Saltus Award.

The highlights of some of the other talks included a presentation by Jane McAdam-Freud about the medals in her great grandfather, Sigmund Freud's, collection which had never been examined before. Julia Krasnobaeva, curator of coins and medals at the Pushkin Museum in Russia delivered a paper, "Medals of Charles X11 in the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts," which may be seen on the museum web site.

The lectures were followed by a bus excursion to Purnu to view the studio and work of Aimo Tukiainen, a Finnish sculptor whose most important work is his statue of Mannerheim located in the public square in front of the Museum of Contemporary art in Helsinki. Tukiainen is known internationally for his pioneering efforts in modernist medal design after World War II. He made his first medal in 1948 and was a prolific sculptor of Finnish medals after he completed the Mannerheim statute in 1967 until the year of his death in 1996.

The Purnu Art Center is now managed by Tukiainen's daughter and it features the work of new artists as well as a studio for

gifted Finnish artists to apply to live and work. Since its first summer exhibition in 1967, the Purnu Art Center has featured the work of “nearly 500 artists and has been visited by over half a million visitors” according to their press release.

The evening included a boat trip to Viikinsaari Island for a buffet meal.

Saturday, June 19: Exhibition prizes and the accolades of delegates and participants ended FIDEM 2010 at the closing banquet held at the Vapriikki Museum Center in Tampere, Finland.

Elly Baltus, a sculptor from the Netherlands, was awarded the Grand Prize for her three medals. Natasha Ratcliffe, a sculptor from the United Kingdom, was awarded a prize as the best artist under 35 years old; and, Bryan Beaverson, of the United States of America, won the Cuhaj Award for best new artist along with Ada Karkoszka of Poland. All three awards come with a stipend.

The final day at FIDEM 2010 offered a medal fair by some of the artists who brought work to sell as well as a general meeting for delegates and time to view the exhibition at the Tampere Art Museum for participants. The closing ceremony and award banquet featured an original musical composition written and performed by Ilka Vionomaa, FIDEM President and Ron Dutton, FIDEM Vice President.



The official FIDEM conference medal



The Official FIDEM 2010 conference poster



Sculptor, Polly Purvis, with her American delegation FIDEM 2010 conference medal.



The medals are on exhibit at the Tampere Art Museum until August 31, 2010.

The Conquest of Canada SPAC Medals (Max B. Spiegel)

The popular Conquest of Canada series is a group of three medals issued by the Society for Promoting Arts and Commerce (SPAC) to commemorate the fall of Canada to the British during the French and Indian War. The designs of these medals were inspired by the Judea Capta series struck by the Roman Empire to celebrate the end of the First Jewish Revolt in AD 70. Betts-421 honors Charles Saunders and James Wolfe for their capture of Quebec, Betts-429 honors Jeffrey Amherst for the capture of Montreal, and Betts-430 commemorates the defeat of Canada. While the designs of these medals have received much attention from numismatists, few specifics are known about their production by the SPAC. Recently, however, I found an article from a 1761 London newspaper that provides a detailed account of Betts-429 and explains the

circumstances behind the manufacture of the Conquest of Canada medals.

The article was published in the June 30, 1761 issue of the *St. James's Chronicle* and primarily focuses on Betts-429. Most important, the article states that these pieces were made by the SPAC as prize medals. It explains that each year the Society gave a prize to the person who produced the best medal, "struck from a Die of his own engraving, the Subject of the Medal being given by the Society." The three SPAC Conquest of Canada medals were struck in different years with designs that showed "some noble Action of our Countrymen." These patriotic medals were then sold by the Society to members of the public.

The engraver of Betts-429, the "Montreal Taken" medal, is identified by the article as John Kirk. While numismatists have speculated that Kirk may have engraved this medal, the article is definitive proof. It also states that the medal was struck in 1761 for the Society. The medal itself is dated 1760, but that apparently refers only to the year of the capture of Montreal and not the date of the medal's manufacture. The newspaper also reports that the Quebec Taken medal (Betts-421), which is dated 1759, was engraved by John Pingo the previous year (1760). The article does not mention the "Canada Subdued" (Betts-430) medal, which was almost certainly struck in 1762. It also does not mention the other SPAC Betts medal, the "Guadalupe Surrenders" (Betts-417) medal. I have not been able to locate any mentions of these two SPAC medals in other contemporary newspapers.

The June 30, 1761 article from the *St. James's Chronicle* article contains a wealth of information of interest to medal collectors so I have reprinted it in its entirety below. The original spellings and punctuation have been preserved.

St. James's Chronicle. June 31, 1761.

"We observe that the Society for promoting Arts and Commerce has given particular Attention to the Improvement of our

Artists in the making of Dies. This Object has been chosen with great Judgement, and altogether in the Spirit of that excellent Institution. Many considerable Articles of our manufactures must thereby be rendered more beautiful, more acceptable at foreign Markets, and of Consequence more valuable to this Country.

Several curious and useful Productions are offered at very moderate Prices, by Means of this ingenious Invention of Dies, which strike many excellent Pieces of Workmanship almost instantaneously. Thus it is that Sword-Hilts, Watch-Chains, Buttons, Snuff-Boxes, Dial-Plates, and many other valuable Branches of Manufacture are executed with so much Ease and Facility, as enables us to spread our Commerce, in those Articles, into every Part of the World.

These were doubtless the Considerations which induced the Society to endeavor at improving this useful Art, by raising a Spirit of Emulation among the ingenious Men who practice it. The Method by which they have undertaken to effect this laudable purpose, it by giving a Prize every Year to the Person, who shall produce the best Medal, struck from a Die of his own engraving, the Subject of the Medal being given by the Society.

And here the Society deserve great Praise; for they have always recorded on their Prize-Medal some noble Action of our Countrymen, and have shewn, that they know Virtue as much as they cherish Ingenuity. We cannot indeed suppose, that the gallant Spirit of a Wolfe, a Saunders, a Hawke, or an Amherst, can want any such Excitement, yet who can doubt but those who highly deserve our Applause, must receive it with real Satisfaction, which it is offered them, genuine and unsought, by a numerous Society of free and worthy Men.

The Medal thus produced in the year 1760, was in Honour of Saunders and Wolfe, and recorded the Taking of Quebec; this has been already described in some of the public Papers. It was performed by John, the Son of

the ingenious Mr. Thomas Pingo, of Great Kirby Street, Hatton-Garden.

That which has been produced this current Year, is the Work of the ingenious Mr. Kirk, of Southampton-Street, Covent-garden. The Intention of this Medal is to record the entire Conquest of Canada, which was completed by Sir Jeffery Amherst, in the Year 1760, when, with the British Forces under his Command, he took Possession of the City and Territory of Mont-Real, the last Place in Canada, at which the French and their American Allies made any Opposition to the British Arms. A Description of this Performance will probably be acceptable to many of our Readers.

On the Face of this Medal is a Figure representing the River of Canada, which altho' it is at present called by the French, the River of St. Lawrence, is supposed to have given its more ancient Name, Canada, to the Country thro' which it flows. He is figured leaning on the Prow of a Ship, and holding an Oar in his Hand, to signify that this River is navigable; and he is accompanied with a Beaver, designed for the particular Symbol of this River, as the Hippopotamus, the Crocodile or the Sphinx is of the River Nile, the Wolf with Romulus and Remus is of the River Tyber, and the Lyre and Branch of Lurel is of the River Meles, &c. On the Side of this Figure is placed the British Standard, formed like an ancient Military Standard; but instead of the Roman Eagle, it is surmounted by the British Lion, passant, guardant. In a Crown of Laurel on this Standard, is inscribed the Name of AMHERST. The Legend is THE CONQUEST OF CANADA COMPLETED. MDCCLX. In the Exergue is a Shield with the Arms of France, and some of the Weapons of the American Savages.

On the Reverse of the Medal is represented Mont-Real, figured by a Woman with her upper Part naked, after the Manner of the North American Savages; she sits under a Pine Tree, with a dejected Air, and her Head reclined on her Hand. Behind her is an Eagle on a Rock, the Symbol by which the Savages

express Mont-Real. Before her is a Hatchet and a Tomohawk, the Weapons of those Savages, accompanied with a Shield, on which are the Arms of France, and in the Middle of which, is represented a Scalp, as the Characteristic of the French Achievements in America. The Legend is MONTREAL TAKEN. MDCCLX and in the Exergue, SOCIETY PROMOTING ARTS AND COMMERCE."

[We are indebted to Max for sharing his discovery, one which provides needed depth to the SPAC medals found in Betts.—Ed.]

Letters to the Editor

Dear John:

Attached is obverse and reverse scans of a medal I have had for many years. I have yet to be able to find out the first thing about it. Perhaps one or more of our MCA members might know something.

HERMAN L. VAIL MEDAL FOR EXPLORATION. 100.4mm. Roughly cast bronze. Signed "SAR" on the exergue line on the obverse. Plain edge. Obverse: KEEWAYDIIN, along the border at upper left. Below: A radiant sun in the background of a forest scene. Beneath are two men in a canoe. In the exergue is what appears to be a beaver gnawing on a piece of wood. Four fish swim to the right. Reverse: HERMAN L. VAIL. MEDAL . FOR EXPLORATION around an unscripted center.

Thanks

Joe Levine



Dear John,

An apparent white metal version of the Libertas Americana medal was recently sold on EBay. The seller stated that his medal had a diameter of 47.5 mm, weighed 41.7 grams, and did not have any edge markings. I've attached an image of the obverse and reverse. Although the photo is somewhat fuzzy, the classic cud at K7 is clearly shown. This Libertas medal does show signs of age, which indicates to me that it is probably not a recent cast or counterfeit. However this sale was an EBay!

I took note that the seller was from France, with many of his sales being French jetons. The weight seems to be consistent for a tin-lead, "white metal" version of the Libertas Americana medal. In reviewing Anne Bentley's and your extremely well researched book, Comitia Americana and

Related Medals, you made reference to the white metal "Lady in White" featured in the September 2006 *Numismatist*. I recall reading, and enjoying the article, and saved it to my files. Unfortunately it is too deeply buried in my files, or lost.

Perhaps if indeed a white metal Libertas has surfaced, we will hear about it in the near future. If you think it useful, I would be willing to send a letter to the seller requesting further information.

Sincerely,

Dick Marlor

[It looks to me like a cast in low grade silver. What do others think?—Ed.]





John [Sallay],

I did an online search for my ancestor Giovanni Battista Nini's Medallions and was led to the April/May 2008 issue of your newsletter. It lists an article by Max B. Spiegel who owned a collection of his. Do you have any idea how I might contact this person? The article is on page 4 and it's entitled A Nini Medallion's Brooklyn connection. Thank you. He said he purchased it out of the Presidential Coin and Antique Company June 30k 2007 Baltimore auction.

Alicia Gray

Alicia,

I don't have Max Spiegel's e-mail address, but the MCA Advisory editor, John Adams, may be able to help you. Another very serious collector of these Nini (and similar) items is Richard Margolis, who is also copied on this e-mail. There are a few different varieties of these medallions, but the most common ones come up at auction every month or two, sometimes in the numismatic arena and sometimes in the fine art and antiques arena.

Good luck!

John Sallay

Thank you so much! I was just interested in some sort of contact with an owner of his medals. I'm also cc'ing this to my cousin Hugh Nini who is also interested. I for one would be curious as to their value now.

Alicia Gray,

Cookeville Tennessee

See my photography, art and articles at <http://galiciagray.blogspot.com/>

Alicia,

Glad to hear that there are some Nini descendants around; do any of them hold any 18th century documents or other authentic information relative to their ancestor?

I expect to be exhibiting a few Nini medals in Boston at the American Numismatic Association convention in Boston beginning August 11.

Richard Margolis

[You should have seen Richard's exhibit. His Nini collection is the best in private hands.—Ed.]

Hello John,

Yes, I do like taking good images of medals.

Attached is a word doc which explains how to remove the background of a medal image and also how to combine obverse / reverse into one image with a transparent background.

The images I firstly sent to you are part of a presentation I did for BAMS which covered naval medals from the Armada to the Battle of La Hogue and includes both the Dutch and English series.

Wonderful period. And then with Queen Ann, it just stopped and fine naval medals didn't come back until Boulton and Kuchler.

Anyway, I've reworked those images for you so they now have transparent backgrounds.

In terms of the actual photowork, I use:

*Nikon Coolpix 8700 or 8750 which can now be bought second hand for a few hundred dollars.

*Nikon SB 600 external flash.

*Nikon SC 28 external flash cord.

This equipment is both cheap and produces incredible results.

As you'd image, I will take maybe a dozen or more pictures of the same medal and then chuck out all the ones that I don't like and work in Photoshop the image that I do like. The trick is moving the hand held external flash around so that you get different effects, and then pick the one that you like.

Best regards,

Sim Comfort

Admiral Vernon Talk

Daniel Fearon has discovered a new example of UNI-15, previously known by but one example. It is no beauty but now that "Munday" has been added to "Saturday", for what were these items used? Best guess gets a prize.--Ed.



New UNI-15

Admiral Vernon medals were very much in evidence at the ANA 2010. Ye editor spoke on the subject to a full house at the Symposium of the Numismatic Bibliomania Society. Nice offerings of Vernon medals were to be found on the Bourse floor. The new Admiral Vernon book was in evidence everywhere—indeed the special edition of Medallic Portraits has sold out and Kolbe/Fanning sold every copy of the regular addition that they had brought to the show.

Steve Tannenbaum, a token and medal specialist, exhibited a lovely specimen of PB_{VI} 1-A. He complained—and quite correctly—that the variety is hard to locate in the book because the icon that places it in the “Vernon with Icons” category is quite subtle. Other reports on the book were enthusiastic, there being a number of new collectors in evidence as well as a flow of new material.—Ed.

Hello John,

I've just received your Magnus Opus on the Vernon medals.

I really like the way you approach a subject and, at last, I'm making sense of these pieces.

I can only imagine that now with the book out, you are receiving a lot of emails regarding discoveries!

Here's a couple of questions for you:

*SCC 6 / (PB_{VI} 20-II) looks like the Y in BY on the obverse legend is clogged and hasn't struck!

*Wonderful confirmation of the scarcity of SCC 3 (CA_{VWL} 1-A)! There's no doubt that this is 322 in Milford Haven. Note on the obverse the clogged S in VIS and at 6 o'clock, the pit under the hand. For the reverse note the edge knocks at 2 o'clock and 2.30.

Once again, congratulations to you and your team on an absolutely stunning production

that will bring these interesting medals to the place they deserve.

Best regards,

Sim Comfort

[The Y in BY on Sim's PB_{VI} 20-II is not “clogged.” Rather, it is a weird “Y” punch with a thick vertical stem supported by a horizontal stand.—Ed.]



Obverse of CA_{VWL} 1-A



Reverse of CA_{VWL} 1-A

How to remove the background from a medal image

- When you have the image oriented the way you want and with the colour you want, then you will want to remove the background.
- First find your image in Photoshop browser and double click on it to bring it to your workplace.
- Click the middle button on the left hand side to get full screen mode with tool bar.
- Magnify the image so that it takes up quite a lot of your screen, but leaves ample room around the edges of the medal.
- From the top ruler bring down a guide to the top edge of the medal.
- From the top ruler bring down another guide to the bottom edge of the medal.
- From the left ruler bring a guide across to the right edge of the medal.
- From the left ruler bring another guide across to the left edge of the medal.
- Select the elliptical marquee tool which produces a small cross as the cursor.
- Position the cross at the upper left intersection of the two guide lines. Position carefully until both elements of the cross turn brown.
- This is the tricky part. When both elements of the cross have turned brown, then hold down the left button of the mouse and drag the elliptical marquee to the lower right intersection of the guide lines. Hold down the left mouse button until the cross cursor has turned brown for both elements. When they go brown, then release the left mouse button.
- You now have dancing ants going all around the edge of the medal.
- Go to Select and click Inverse. This changes the selection from the medal to everything around the medal.
- Click Delete. Only the medal is left and the background is now transparent.
- Go to View and click Clear Guides.
- Do a Control D and you remove the dancing ants.
- Go to File and do a Save As and give the completed image a unique name.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Date: _____
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QUESTIONNAIRE

How did you learn about the MCA?

What are your collecting interests?

What would you see highlighted in MCA publications?

For volunteers: I am willing to devote time to the following MCA projects:

DUES: \$30.00 PER CALENDAR YEAR (Includes a subscription to monthly publications of the MCA advisory)

Please send completed application and payment to:

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c/o Barry Tayman
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